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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KWBG](#) [KPAL](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: PM FAYYAD AND SECURITY CHIEFS ARGUE FOR INCREASED
COORDINATION, SECURITY PRESENCE

REF: JERUSALEM 2317

Classified By: Consul General Daniel Rubinstein
for reasons 1.4 (b,d).

SUMMARY

11. (C/NF) Summary: In January 7 conversations with Post, senior Palestinian Authority (PA) officials offered sober assessments of the December 24 shooting of an Israeli settler in the West Bank and the subsequent Israel Defense Forces (IDF) raid that led to the death of three Palestinian suspects in the settler's murder (Reftel). Prime Minister Salam Fayyad welcomed constructive USG criticism of the performance of PA security officials, but also noted (as did senior PA security officials) that in the absence of identifiable deficiencies on the PA's part, the two incidents indicated the need for an increased PA security presence in Areas B and C of the West Bank (villages and countryside in which the IDF retains overall security control), and a halt to IDF incursions into Area A population centers (in which the PA has responsibility for provision of security). Both Fayyad and his senior security officials were clear on the need for increased PA-GOI security coordination. End Summary.

FAYYAD: OPEN TO CRITICISM OF PA SECURITY PERFORMANCE

12. (C/NF) In a January 7 meeting in Jerusalem, Prime Minister Fayyad noted the political fallout on the PA caused by the IDF's decision to act unilaterally on December 26 in apprehending three Palestinian suspects in the December 24 murder of an Israeli settler in the West Bank. "Politically, my biggest problem is that (the IDF) decided to go it alone," he said. Fayyad focused less on the fallout from the raid than its practical implications for the future of PA-GOI security coordination. He welcomed an informed USG assessment of whether shortcomings in PA security forces' capabilities had justified the IDF decision to take unilateral action, and said he would take steps to correct any deficiencies where they were found to exist. However, Fayyad said, if no serious deficiencies could be identified, the lessons of the events of December 24 and 26 were clear in his view: There should be an end to IDF incursions in Area A, and the PASF should be allowed to conduct operations in Areas B and C. Note: The December 24 incident itself occurred in Area C. End Note.

FAYYAD: PA'S ASSESSMENT FAVORABLE

13. (C/NF) Fayyad said that his own assessment of the performance of PA security officials' in the 24-48 hours

after the December 24 murder was that they had performed well. He claimed that PA security forces had provided the IDF with leads that led to the suspects' interception and death on January 26. He argued that the suspects' former affiliation with the al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades (AAMB) gave the IDF no cause to doubt the PA's willingness to act against the AAMB. He pointed to PA security forces' 2007 arrest of an AAMB-affiliated criminal suspect who was, at the time of his apprehension, on active duty as a PA General Intelligence (GI) officer -- and who remains in prison today. Fayyad said he regretted the deaths of the three primary suspects in the murder. Noting that three Palestinian co-conspirators now in PA custody were providing valuable information, Fayyad suggested that if taken alive, the three suspects killed by the IDF on December 26 might also have been the source of useful intelligence.

FAYYAD: NEED FOR A RE-FOCUS ON AL-AQSA AMNESTY

14. (C/NF) Fayyad conceded that in 2009, PA security forces' focus on interdicting Hamas cells in the West Bank had decreased the attention paid to rehabilitation and supervision of former AAMB members enrolled in a joint PA-GOI fugitive "amnesty" program. Following the December 24 and 26 incidents, the PA had compensated by increasing surveillance on former AAMB members, he said. Fayyad and PA security officials argued that the scale and quality of PA security forces' response to the December 24 murder made unilateral Israeli action unnecessary.

15. (C/NF) Note: PA security officials confirmed to Post
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that the PA was "taking measures" to tighten oversight of participants in the AAMB amnesty program. On the afternoon of January 7, these officials said, the PA detained seven program participants on the basis of information provided to the PA by the Israel Security Agency (ISA) that they had broken the terms of the program, mostly due to failing to turn in weapons. End Note.

SECURITY CHIEFS: PA RESPONSE SWIFT, COORDINATED

16. (C/NF) In meetings with senior security officials held the same day, PA officials defended the performance of PA security forces in response to the December 24 murder. PA Civil Police Chief Hazim Atallah claimed that within three hours of the shooting, PA officials had located the car used in the attacks, arrested three co-conspirators who had set it on fire in an attempt to hide the evidence, and shared these findings with the IDF and ISA. Within six hours, Atallah said, PA security officials had arrested over 150 people -- primarily suspected weapons dealers and car thieves who might have useful information about the firearms and/or vehicles used in the attack. PA Minister of Interior Said Abu Ali noted that PA-GOI security coordination reached "critical levels" in the hours after the incident, and continued at a rapid, sustained pace until the PA passed GOI officials what Abu Ali described as specific, actionable intelligence leading to the three suspects killed on December 26.

NEED FOR INCREASED PA SECURITY PRESENCE IN AREAS B AND C

17. (C/NF) PA security officials dismissed charges that the shooting in itself indicated a breakdown in the West Bank security regime, noting that the murder took place in Area C territory near the Israeli settlement of Shavei Shomron, where PA security forces are forbidden to operate without prior IDF permission. Atallah noted police statistics showed that West Bank crime rates were highest in those Area B and C sites at the greatest distance from PA police stations. The December 24 murder, he said, rather than detracting from PA security capability, argued for the need to expand it to

areas currently under the security control of the IDF.

18. (C/NF) PA officials also discussed in detail the challenges of crowd control and public order faced by PA security forces in the days immediately after the December 26 IDF raid into downtown Nablus. The incursion sparked demonstrations of up to 15,000 protesters shouting anti-PA slogans and condemning PA security forces' cooperation with the GOI.

SECURITY CHIEFS ARGUE FOR INCREASED PA-GOI COORDINATION

19. (C/NF) Senior PA security chiefs said that increased and intensified PA-GOI security coordination was needed. Atallah told Post that he had requested an increase in coordination with IDF contacts, saying, "we are ready to take this to the next level. But what we need now is not meetings (with the GOI) for coffee and a chat. We need meetings that are practical and serious." Minister Abu Ali said he was "eager to share information with the (GOI) on what procedures and measures we are using to handle the (AAMB), and other issues," while noting, "after we share, we also need space from them (the GOI) to implement." Even usually-taciturn National Security Forces West Bank Commander Abu al-Fatah pledged responsiveness to actionable Israeli intelligence, saying, "we can use (their intelligence). We have a mutual interest. If we have the information, we will go to the farthest point of the West Bank within thirty minutes to take care of it."

RUBINSTEIN